



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY  
REGION 5  
77 WEST JACKSON BOULEVARD  
CHICAGO, IL 60604-3590

EPA Region 5 Records Ctr.



257508

**JUN 06 2006**

REPLY TO THE ATTENTION OF

SE-5J

Mr. Steven Donald  
Unite Here Local 1  
55 West Van Buren Street, Suite 400  
Chicago, Illinois 60605

RE: Lindsay Light Zone and Three Specific Chicago, IL Properties

Dear Mr. Donald:

On May, 15, 2006, I returned your telephone call about the boundaries of the Lindsay Light Company thorium-impacted zone and the specific disposition of three properties, Fordham Spire, 346 East North Water Street; Mandarin Oriental Hotel, 451 East Wacker; and River North, 400 North Dearborn. To answer your question we first need to review the history of the Lindsay Light Company which refined thorium containing ores and manufactured commercial and residential gas light mantles impregnated with thorium nitrate to make them burn brighter.

The Lindsay Light Company operated at several Streeterville locations from approximately 1904 to 1936 when the company moved their operations to the City of West Chicago, which is approximately 35 miles from downtown Chicago. Lindsay and its successor corporations operated its "Rare Earths Facility" in West Chicago until 1974 when the manufacturing operations discontinued. U.S. EPA and other agencies aerially surveyed the West Chicago area looking for areas of elevated radiation. U.S. EPA later used a "scanner van" to look for radioactivity in the West Chicago neighborhoods. By the early 1990s in addition to the Illinois Department of Nuclear Safety (now Illinois Emergency Management Agency, Division of Nuclear Safety) cleanup of the Rare Earths Facility itself, U.S. EPA designated four Superfund sites in the West Chicago area that were contaminated with thorium mill tailings like those in Streeterville. The four sites identified by the aerial and scanner van investigation were the Residential Areas Sites where over 670 residential and commercial properties were cleaned up, the Reed-Keppler Park Site a 100-acre public park, the Sewage Treatment Plant Site and the Kress Creek/ West Branch DuPage River.

U.S. EPA has searched for the Lindsay Light Company's disposal records in Streeterville to no avail. Furthermore, neither an aerial survey nor a scanner van survey has proved useful in Streeterville where most of the potentially contaminated soils are covered by pavement and buildings. While the pavement and buildings prevent radiation detection devices from finding elevated areas, the pavement and buildings shield the public from

elevation radiation as well. Only when construction workers or utility workers are exposing potentially contaminated subsurface soils is there a risk to public health. As a consequence of the lack of disposal records and the shielding effect of pavement, U.S. EPA has been forced to rely upon information about known contamination, the history of Streeterville streets, railroads and utilities, knowledge of Lindsay's operations, and best professional judgment to determine where surveillance of subsurface soils must be required. Therefore, the thorium-impacted soil zone is continually evolving. Previously USEPA had considered the eastern boundary to be Lake Shore Drive, LakeShore East/Family Golf Course the southern boundary, Michigan Avenue western boundary, and Ohio Street the northern boundary, however, contamination has been found north of Ohio Street. There is a property on the west side of Michigan Avenue, specifically, 22 West Hubbard, that was a former Lindsay operation, where contamination was found underneath the building. To help determine the boundary of the thorium-impacted soils, we are in process of trying to undertake a study of historical records on fill activities in the Streeterville areas.

Now, the disposition of the following three properties:

1. Fordham Spire (AKA Calvatarra), 346 East North Water Street

About 1 year ago, U. S. EPA explained to Fordham that radiation monitoring was necessary prior to and during construction activities, as deemed necessary. We are not aware of a start date for the development.

2. Mandarin Oriental Hotel, 451 East Wacker (AKA Stetson & Lake)


The property owner, Kenny Construction, has refused U.S. EPA access to conduct surface radiation monitoring. Due to your recent inquiry, we will now follow-up with a letter to all parties including the City of Chicago, again requesting a specific date for access to the property to conduct our own survey and a copy of all environmental assessment reports.

3. River North, 400 North Dearborn (AKA Friedman Properties Development at Dearborn and Kinzie)

On Monday, May 15, 2006, I spoke with Robert Lopatin, Chief Operating Officer/Director of Development, regarding work on this property. According to their environmental consultant, Shadow Mirkhaef of Environmental Group Services, Ltd., Chicago, IL, during cassion excavation they discovered an underground storage tank. Once a permit is received from the City of Chicago, they will remove this tank, which is purported to be a 1,000 – 1, 500 gallon heating oil tank. Currently, we are trying to get permission to enter this property and conduct radiation surveillance because of this property's proximity to 22 West Hubbard.

U.S. EPA will also meet with you sometime during mid-June to review your map and answer any additional questions. Please feel free to contact me at (312) 886-3601 or Mike Joyce, Community Involvement Coordinator, at (312) 353-5546.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Verneta Simon". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Verneta Simon  
On-Scene Coordinator

bcc: Mary Fulghum, C-14J  
Charles Gebien, SE-5J  
Eugene Jablonowski, SMF-4J  
Mike Joyce, P-19J  
Cathleen Martwick, C-14J  
Debbie Regel, SE-5J